

Kelly Ranch
Habitat Conservation Area
(S024)

Annual Report
October 2005 - September 2006

Prepared for:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
California Department of Fish and Game
City of Carlsbad

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I. Introduction

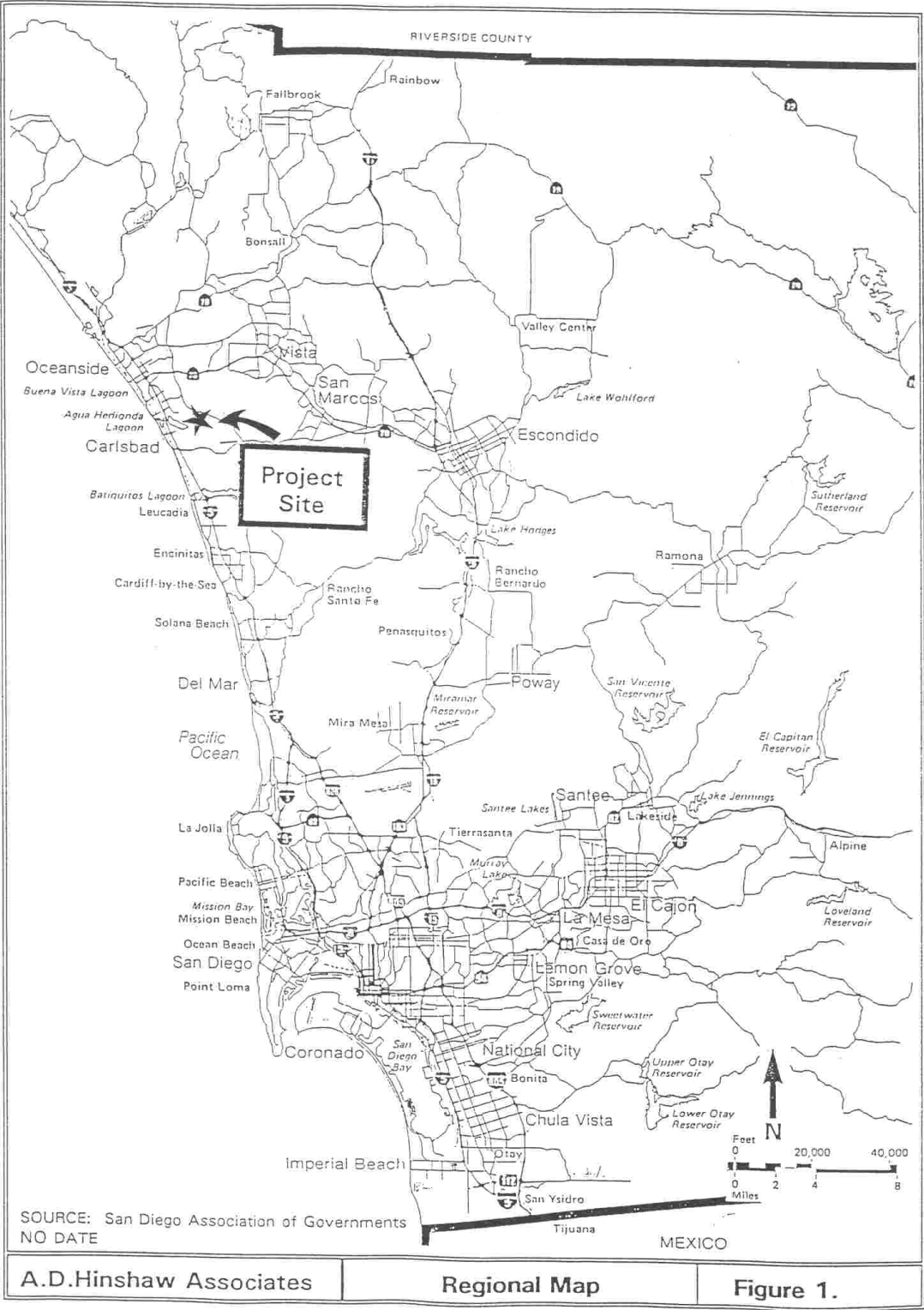
This report summarizes the management activities carried out on the Kelly Ranch Habitat Conservation Area (Preserve) by the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) during the fiscal year of October 1, 2005 to September 31, 2006. The tasks and objectives discussed below are those derived from the *Kelly Ranch Habitat Conservation Area Management Plan*, prepared by CNLM in November of 2002 (CNLM 2002).

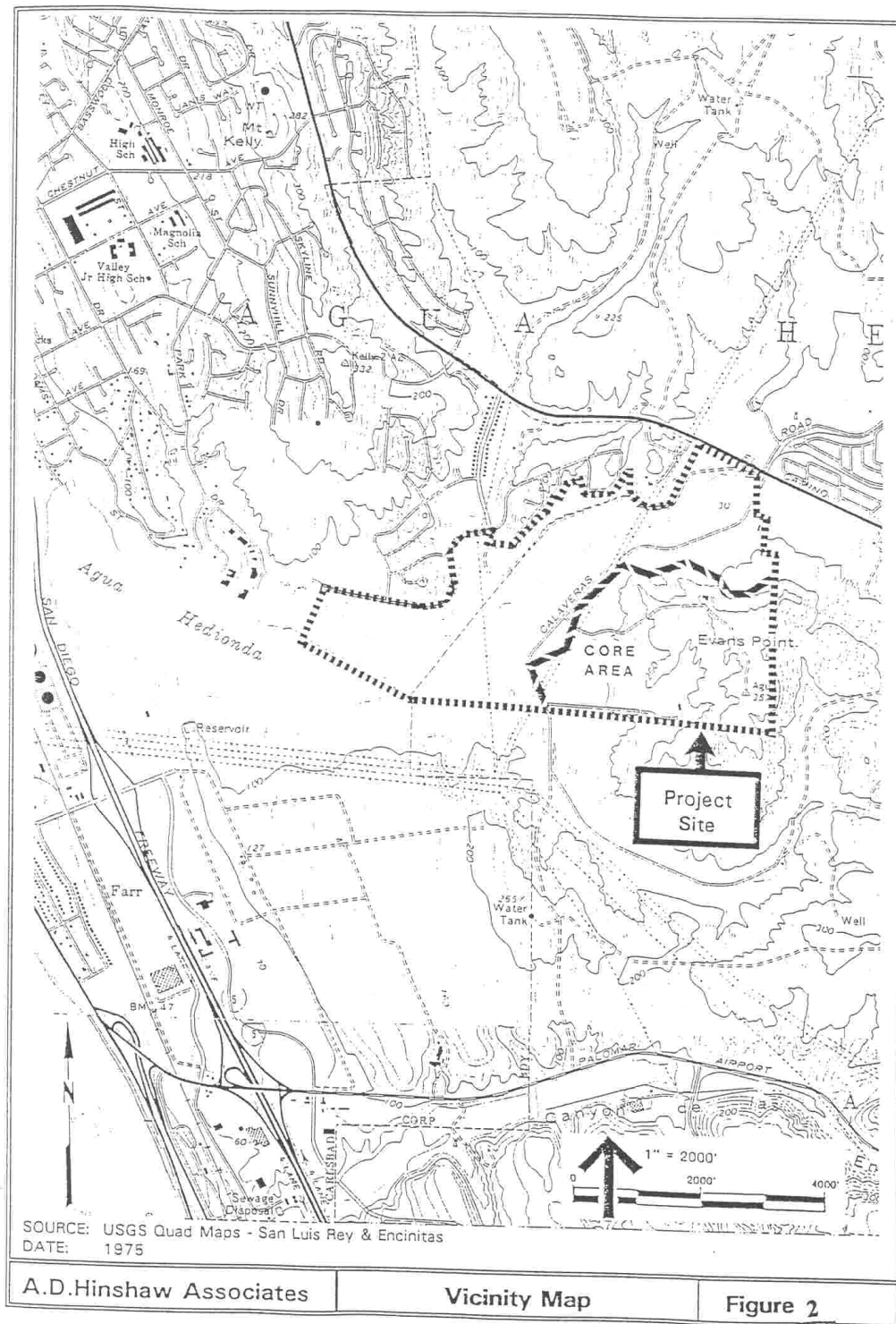
The Preserve is located approximately two miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and lies at the east end of Agua Hedionda Lagoon (Figures 1 and 2). Roads near the Preserve include Cannon Road along the northern boundaries and Faraday Avenue near the eastern boundary. The Preserve (63 acres) is not one unit, but is comprised of multiple parcels varying in size from a few acres to about 15 acres that are located within the housing development of Kelly Ranch and surrounding communities (Figure 3). Most of the Preserve and adjacent land was formerly known as Evans Point. The Preserve was set aside to protect its habitat, coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral, and the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*).

CNLM began managing the Preserve in March of 2002. CNLM has a conservation easement (CE) over the Preserve and is fully endowed for long-term management. Management at the Preserve includes posting and maintaining signing and maintaining fences (capital improvements), biological surveys, habitat maintenance and restoration, public services, and reporting. Each of these activities and their fiscal year results are summarized below and fully described within this report.

2005-2006 CNLM ACTIVITY SUMMARY

- Three pairs of coastal California gnatcatchers were detected
- Several new western dichondra (*Dichondra occidentalis*) populations were located and one new Palmer's grappling hook (*Harpagonella palmeri*) population was located
- Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*) that were planted near Cannon Road were counted
- Regular patrol, site enforcement and trash pickup were conducted to protect the Preserve
- Nonnative species were removed as necessary
- Photo view point locations were established and photos were taken
- Several meetings occurred between CNLM, the Homeowner's Association (HOA) and Shea Homes (the developer) and the Center provided the HOA board with a presentation of the Preserve
- Homeowner communication/education continued
- Restoration was coordinated with Planning Systems, Inc. (the environmental consultant for the Kelly Ranch development)
- A CE baseline documentation binder was created







Kelly Ranch 2006 Sensitive Species

II. Capital Improvements

The site has been well signed and no additional signing, gating or fencing was required or planned during this past year.

III. Biological Surveys

CNLM performed the first set of biological surveys in 2003. Year 2004 built upon the 2003 surveys and laid groundwork for the 2005 and 2006 surveys. The *Management Plan* (CNLM 2002) outlines the goals of biological monitoring at the Preserve. The general goal of the monitoring activities at Kelly Ranch is to 1) collect inventory data and 2) to assess the health of the vegetation communities. Since the site is relatively small, steep and fragmented, little research can be done on the Preserve.

Biological surveys are described below by the following categories: reptiles and amphibians, mammal, birds, and plants and vegetation communities. A discussion of the biological surveys completed during the 2005-2006 fiscal year are described under each appropriate category.

1. Reptiles and Amphibians Reptiles and amphibians were noted anecdotally during surveys for other taxa. No focused or United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) protocol level surveys were conducted. Species detected during the year include western fence lizards (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and side-blotched lizards (*Uta stansburiana*).

2. Mammals No focused or USFWS protocol level mammal surveys were conducted during the year. Mammals observed during surveys included cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), and coyote (*Canis latrans*). Woodrat (*Neotoma* spp.) nests were located during the surveys, but no woodrats were observed.

3. Birds USFWS protocol surveys for coastal California gnatcatchers were conducted during the months of March and April on three separate days (Table 1). Survey procedure followed the USFWS accepted protocol for conducting gnatcatcher surveys. Table 1 outlines survey dates, times, and weather conditions. Protocol coastal California gnatcatcher surveys were conducted by Ms. Jessica Vinje who holds an independent USFWS Section 10a “take” permit (TE094318-0) authorizing her for such surveys.

Three pairs of gnatcatchers were observed during the surveys (Figure 3).

Table 1
2006 USFWS Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys

Date	Time	Weather
3/20/2006	8:00 am -1:00 pm	53 F; wind 2-5 mph; clear and sunny
4/3/2006	7:50 am - 12:00 pm	60 F; wind 1-3 mph; sunny with clouds
4/19/2006	7:50 am - 11:00 am	62 F; wind 1-3 mph; clear and sunny

4. Plants and Vegetation Communities As per the Management Plan, surveys will be conducted for all sensitive plant species, except Orcutt's hazardia, in 2008. Orcutt's hazardia surveys were conducted during this fiscal year. During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, additional sensitive plants were mapped if the plants located were new populations that had not been mapped during the 2003 sensitive plant survey effort. Several new populations of western dichondra and one new population of Palmer's grappling hook were located (Figure 3). Approximately 100 Palmer's grappling hook plants were located and many western dichondra "patches" were located in the new populations.

The Center owns the only naturally occurring population of Orcutt's hazardia located within the Manchester Habitat Conservation Area. In the spring of 2003, the Center planted 25 Orcutt's hazardia plants at Kelly Ranch, just off Cannon Road. In the spring of 2004, the Center planted 100 additional Orcutt's hazardia plants within the same area. Habitat (i.e., soils, aspect, vegetation community, proximity to the ocean) in the transplant location at the Kelly Ranch Preserve are similar to the habitat found at the Manchester Habitat Conservation Area. By the summer of 2005, 97 Orcutt's hazardia had survived. Approximately 104 Orcutt's hazardia were counted in 2006. All of the observed plants were adults and no seedlings were observed. However, almost every plant observed was flowering and setting seed.

Vegetation communities were mapped in 2005. In general the vegetation communities on Kelly Ranch are of very high quality. Several areas are being restored by Planning Systems (Shea Homes Environmental Consultant) as part of the Kelly Ranch Development requirements.

IV. Habitat Maintenance and Restoration

Habitat restoration goals for the Preserve include removing nonnative plants from the preserve. For the most part the Preserve is in good condition and has little nonnative plant cover.

During the past fiscal year, approximately 15 pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) were sprayed, several large iceplant (*Carprobrotus edulis*) patches were sprayed, several tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.) re-sprouts were cut and sprayed and approximately 50 tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) plants were cut. Planning Systems has started its revegetation program that will end in approximately four years. This includes enhancing habitat west of Cannon Road and along manufactured slopes within the development.

V. Public Service

Public service activities have centered around patrolling the Preserve in an attempt to control dumping and associated vandalism. In addition, public services include trash pick up and meeting with neighboring home owners who have questions or concerns in regards to the Preserve.

The Preserve was patrolled at least 3-4 times per month. During each visit the Preserve was surveyed for illegal activities, trash was picked up, and nonnative, invasive plants were removed and removed or treated.

Several meetings occurred during this past fiscal year. One meeting with Shea Homes, Planning Systems, and the Center occurred in late January to discuss the division of responsibility within the Preserve. After this meeting, the Center gave a presentation to the HOA board describing the roles and responsibilities of the Center on the Preserve. There have been ongoing discussions, both by phone and email, with the HOA regarding issues that were raised by the Center after the Center completed it's baseline CE compliance survey (discussed below in Section VI - Reporting). These issues included planting of iceplant by the HOA and Shea Homes in the HOA maintained areas between the homes and the CE, which is against the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions of the HOA and severe erosion on the western side of the Spyglass development. Additionally, the Center met with Planning Systems to discuss issues that were located in the revegetation areas of the Preserve. The Center also met with several homeowners to discuss public use of the Preserve and dumping of lawn and yard waste in the Preserve and also participated in the HOA landscape maintenance committee walk-through as requested by the HOA manager.

VI. Reporting

Reporting includes all data analysis, GIS and remote sensing, regional coordination, photo documentation activities and budget and financial reporting. Additionally, during this fiscal year, a CE compliance binder was created for the Preserve.

Data that have been entered into digital databases include survey (plant and animal) data. This report represents the fourth annual report for the Preserve. An annual work plan for the next fiscal year will be provided to the wildlife agencies in December of 2006. Photo documentation stations were established during this fiscal year and photos were taken.

The CE compliance binder contains Kelly Ranch CE baseline documentation (including photo viewpoints) and CE monitoring procedures. The baseline documentation is how the Center establishes the current habitat quality and condition of a property at the time a CE is granted. If a CE violation occurs, the baseline documentation is the evidence necessary to prove that violation and win resolution. The monitoring policy included in the CE binder was designed to standardize the Center's monitoring of CE properties. It ensures that all CE properties are being managed appropriately while ensuring consistency and continuity among CNLM's staff.

Finally, the Preserve manager has maintained all necessary agency permits to allow the continued monitoring of the Preserve's biota.

Budget/Financials: The total expenditures for 2005-2006 were \$11,289 of a planned budget of \$13,608. The unspent monies mostly represent planned contingency funds which were not required during the fiscal year.

VII. Summary and Discussion

Management of the Preserve continues to be successful by protecting it from human encroachment, building baseline biological data, and developing a better understanding of the Preserve and its regional context. Preserve Management in next year will continue in a similar fashion as this year. A detailed work plan for the next fiscal year has been developed for this purpose.

VIII. References

CNLM. The Center for Natural Lands Management. 2002. Habitat Management Plan for the Kelly Ranch Habitat Conservation Area. November, 2002.